

# Counterfeit Conversion (5 of 6)

by Winkie Pratney

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*Winkie Pratney explores the concept of counterfeit conversion, emphasizing the importance of genuine faith and the dangers of superficial beliefs.*

**Duration:** 54:16

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:8, Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38, Romans 1:16, Ephesians 2:8, James 2:17

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "False Conversion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of not allowing worldly desires and material possessions to choke out the word of God in our lives. He emphasizes the need for Christians to remain fruitful and not lose their first love for God. The preacher mentions that many Christians are not as effective for God as they should be, comparing them to the Navy after Pearl Harbor. He then goes on to explain the biblical signs of these 'weeds' that can hinder our spiritual growth and offers insights on how to overcome them.

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## Transcript

Six different messages on counterfeit conversion, or study, really, of conversion. And we have looked so far at what kind of ground? First kind of ground we looked at? Wayside ground, and we said that represented what kind of faith? A legal faith as opposed to gospel faith, characteristics of legal? Selfishness, and its parameters? Reward and punishment, or threat and bribe. In contrast to that, gospel faith? Love and trust, and it requires a giving up of a self-centeredness.

And we are, if we are being morally ruled at all, we are in one of those two kingdoms. A kingdom of legal obedience, which says a bare minimum of morality, but is not the gospel. Or a true gospel submission, where you consider two sons, identical twins in the same family.

One, you'll see in that little study sheet I gave you, one who loves his dad, and trusts him, and does what his dad asks him to do, simply on that basis. The other son, who fears that he might be cut out of the dad's inheritance, if he doesn't do what he says, and tries to butter up his dad, so make sure he'll stay in his good books. Now, both of them may do identical things, they may live in the same house, they may carry out identical work programs, or all this different thing, but there is a total difference in their attitudes, and God does not want the forced obedience of mere slaves.

He wants the love and the trust of sons and daughters, and that is the gospel. Second kind of soil we looked at. The rocky soil, and remember what happened with this? It sprung up, and then the sun came out, and withered away the plant.

We looked briefly at what the sun represented. Could you tell us biblically what those three or four things were? Yes. Temptation was one, tribulation another, affliction or persecution.

Sometimes those words are used interchangeably in the New Testament, but that gives you the broad spectrum of the things. What does the sun do to a normal healthy plant whose roots go down? Helps it grow. We then made a stab at guessing what these hard rocks may represent parabolically.

What did we come up with? They are unyielded things, something down there that will not yield. Ground is yielding, but rock is not. One of the major things, at least in this culture, is not bad things, not deep down hidden bad things, but deep down hidden good things.

The hardest kind of things to break are good things. It is much easier, for instance, to resist the temptation of an enemy. If you are called to a mission field, for instance, and God gives you this call, and an enemy comes up and says, You go to the mission field, boy, and you watch out.

There is a real threat on your life. You go. But what if a friend comes, somebody dear and close, and says, If you go to the mission field, you break my heart.

That is a different story, a much more difficult thing to handle. There are many young people who would have obeyed God's call, but a good thing got in the way, a good career, a good relationship, a nice thing, a right, not a wrong, that got in the way of God. Now, today, we look at probably the hairiest one of all of these things.

This is the third kind of soil. We have already looked at the birds and the monolith monsters, or the day the earth caught fire, I suppose we could call the other one too. We want to look at the third one now, and we'll call this the day of the Triffids.

Triffids were a creation of John Wyndham, some plants that landed on earth from Mars or something. It's always coming from outer space. They never come from inner space.

Here is the story. Can somebody read out that particular passage for us? Mark will do. Okay, it's a very simple statement.

Some fell among thorns. So here's the seed. Is this ground capable of supporting healthy plant life? Yes, it is.

I mean, you know, there's a lot of healthy plants there, but unfortunately, some are not nice. So this plant goes in its roots. Instead of going outward, go down.

That's a good sign. It doesn't shoot up as fast as the other one. The seed buried under there, and it's growing.

There doesn't seem to be a lot of rocks down there. The plant goes up. Just like the previous one, it looks like it's going to be a good deal.

Unfortunately, it's the day of the Triffids. These Triffids, of course, in Wyndham's thing were plants that killed you. You know, they walk around, click, click, and making funny noises.

Here we have sort of the divine equivalent of that. A plant that starts off well, but is choked out or killed by other plants that are planted right beside it. So here we have a garden that is the soil in which it's healthy, but there's been no care.

There's been no weeding in this thing, and those weeds choke out what otherwise would be a great life, a great witness, a great ministry, or something, a great Christianity. Now, we're going to look briefly at what the Scripture speaks about, these things and weeds, but can we take it a block at a time? I want to give you the problem first. We are basically looking at those five different things Benjamin Keats talked about, one of them being perhaps the failure to properly prepare the soil, or an analysis of the kind of reasons why some people don't make it.

But I'll never forget this. In New Zealand, in a church, an orthodox, fundamentally evangelical church, a young lady came up to a deacon in the church who had just become a Christian. She'd been saved about two weeks.

And the deacon said to her, How is it with your soul, or words to that effect? That's even how he talked. How is it with your soul? She said, Oh, it's so exciting. She said, I'm so happy I can hardly sleep.

And he said, Don't worry, you'll soon get over it. Now, that has to be a double tragedy. Number one, that a man who's supposed to be a deacon, an elder in a church, who'd say a thing to a precious young child of God like that, and damp... You know, if you had a choice between damping two enthusiastic people and trying to stir up two dead people, which one would you pick? It's easier to cool down a fanatic than revive a corpse, isn't it? And I don't think our real problem today is cooling down fanaticism.

That's what Tozer talked about. That's like sort of trying to keep the inhabitants of a graveyard from making merry. You know, they... That just doesn't happen in a huge chunk of time.

Our problem is to get dead people to live, which is a much more difficult problem than cooling down somebody who should be a little quieter. But the second part of this tragedy is that all too often it should be true, that you get over it, that in the words of Scripture you lose your first love, that something happens to you and you get choked out somewhere along the way. Now, it is no secret.

One man wrote that many Christians are about as effective for God as the Navy was for the United States 15 minutes after Pearl Harbor. And we're going to look just briefly at this first thing, at the signs, biblical signs, of what these weeds may be. Can you give me in order, first, in Jesus' explanation, Matthew 13, 22, Mark 4, 18, and Luke 8, 14, what he amplifies as the substance of this parable? Can you give me, first of all, the first characteristic of this soil? They hear the word.

And for a third time, we are not dealing with irreligious people. Next. Now, can you look at Luke 8, 14? There is an interesting little addition.

That's one of the scariest little additions I've... additions, not e-ditions, additions, amplifications. The way to really, I think, to get the full meat of anything that Jesus says in these parables is to do what... we've called it interweave analysis. You take the synoptic gospels and you can... instead of just putting them in parallel columns, you actually weave.

It's better to do it in Greek, but English is fine, too. You take the different phrases, and where there's a duplication of a phrase, like when the word and appears three times, you just drop one of them, or drop two of them, and keep the other and. And you just keep them in chronological order, and then you get a full, detailed statement, which I think represents the whole thing of what Jesus said, in which each gospel picks up from their own perspective and gives you most of it, or sections of it, and to read the whole thing gives you sometimes additional insight.

Now, Luke, who is... shows us Christ as man, and with all his humanity, and shows us him also as the frailties of Christ. You see the times he had to pray when he's thirsty, and Luke's a teacher's gospel, too, and it amplifies a great deal of the inner life of Christ. Now, he puts in one little two-word phrase.

Can you find that phrase? Just before the rest of it. He goes forth. Now, that is a very scary phrase.

You know why it's a scary phrase? Because it's the same kind of phrase that's used for missions. Go out, go forth, go into... It's a sending phrase. I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

It's a ministry type of phrase. It's not one of just being there and stuff like that. It almost implies like this person is actually involved in some kind of work of ministry when this thing happens.

And so I want to introduce you in this session to the third and maybe the scariest of all of these things. And that is the person who not only starts and appears to grow well, but actually begins to duplicate or replicate or in some way have some kind of public ministry and then falls apart and then gets choked out and then gets destroyed. So let's list now what the sculpture represents these weeds as being.

Can you give me a list of these things now? First, the worries or the cares of what? Of this world. Implying there's another one. Which you ought to care about.

Second, yeah, now Matthew puts in and Mark puts in the what? The deceitfulness of riches. So something that riches can do. What did we say was the chief sign of the last days? Deception, religious deception.

So here's that word appearing again in context with economics. Now, does being poor make you godly? No, it does not. It's an old song.

I dreamt of the great judgment morning and it says the poor man was there, the rich man was there, but his riches had melted and vanished away. The poor man was there with his burdens. His debts were too heavy to pay.

So we're not Marxists. It's not your economics that determine your future. But there's a difference apparently between riches and wealth.

The Bible says if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them. And it's the love of money that is the root of all evil. I'm going to give you some very tragic, practical examples.

I won't mention any names of people, but I think you could pretty much fill in the blanks for yourself in many, many circumstances of what happens in the Western world in this situation. And a third one. Yeah, the desires.

King James had a good old strong word, the lusts of other things. That strong desire, the epithemia. The word epithemia, the strong desire, is not a bad word in itself.

Some people think, you know, that it's the strength of a feeling that makes something right or wrong, but it isn't. If you had a strong desire for money, does that mean you're wrong? Not necessarily. Let's say, you know, there were 100,000 people starving to death and you needed a million dollars to feed them and to take care of them straight away.

You could have an intense desire for money and I'd be wrong. Not the intensity of desire. If you hadn't eaten for 48 days and you had an intense desire for food, that's different from gluttony.

Okay? So, George MacDonald said a neat thing about things, and you might like to write this down because it's the simplest, most profound thing I've ever heard on our relationship to the material world. He said, if it be things that slay you, if it be things that slay you, that kill you, that put you to death, if it be things that slay you, what matter things you have, what matter things you have or things you have not? In other words, you can be poor, you can be rich and still be slain by things. Be poor and wanting things, be rich and having things, and things are your problem.

The love of things, the desire for things, the rulership of things. And there is an end to this. One says, it chokes the word and he becomes unfruitful.

Another one says, it chokes the word and it becomes unfruitful. And the last one, Luke again adds an extra little thing, brings forth no fruit to maturity or to perfection. So there's no fruit.

Nipped in the bud is what we would say colloquially. Now, I want to read to you now some more clips. Some of you have read this book.

If not, it's well worth reading. You don't have to read the last chapter if you like. I don't read it very often.

But the analysis is great. I don't know whether the solution is as profound as it could be, but the analysis is accurate. This is Walter Chantry's little book, *Today's Gospel, Authentic or Synthetic*.

And here's a pastor with his heart in the right place who is concerned about what is happening in evangelical Christianity today. And what interests me is this. This call for cleaning up the Christian church is coming from all sides of the Christian church.

It's coming from the Calvinist side. It's coming from the Armenians. It's coming from the mystics.

It's coming from the reformers. It's coming from every side of the Christian church. And it's saying, we have departed from the content of the gospel.

We are not preaching what we should be preaching. And what's interesting, though the answers are different, the reformers go, we need to return to the days of Calvin and Luther. And they go, yay.

And all the Armenians go, what about John Wesley and those guys? Don't leave them. So there's that still going on. But the analysis is the same.

They all say, this is a problem. This is what needs to be done. So I want to read you a couple of little bits here from Chantry.

He first talks about how the church is astir with questions about evangelism and hope for revival. Never have there been more missionaries. Never have there been more evangelistic campaigns.

Never more Christians studying to do personal evangelism. Never such enormous conferences to examine seriously the cause and cure of lameness in the gospel ministry. Then he mentions thousands of people of a hundred nations all met for evangelism conferences.

And yet, after all this analysis, evaluating, praying and hoping, missions are not in great store being revitalized and sinners not turning to Christ in great numbers. And we have to take this with a pinch of salt because we're talking about the Western world and the average evangelical fundamental church in this nation. There are some exceptions, thank God.

And then, he goes on and he says this. The central issue of the way of salvation, large segments of Protestantism are engrossed in neo-traditionalism. We have inherited a system of evangelistic preaching which is unbiblical.

Nor is this tradition very ancient. Our messages and manner of preaching the gospel cannot be traced back to the Reformers and their creeds. They are much more recent innovations.

They have clearly arisen from superficial exegesis and a careless mixture of 20th century reason with God's revelation. Products of modern evangelism are often sad examples of Christianity. They make a profession of faith and then continue to live like the world.

Decisions for Christ mean very little. Only a small proportion of those who make decisions, quote unquote, evidence the grace of God and a transformed life. All this related to the use of a message in evangelism that is unbiblical.

The truth necessary for life has been hidden in a smokescreen of human inventions. On the shallow ground of man's logic, large numbers have been led to assume they have a right to everlasting life and have been given an assurance which does not belong to them. Evangelicals are swelling the ranks of the deluded with a perverted gospel.

And then he goes on talking about those who read these pages and he says, Could you be misleading souls and misdirecting the labor of other Christians? Have you closely examined your message and methods in the light of God's word? Pastors, this is no idle question. Have you not wondered about those converts who are as carnal as ever? What about those who have decided for Christ and you can't tell what they've decided? They're not godly like the Savior they profess, nor zealous for his cause. They do not study the word and do not mind if they're absent when it is preached.

Consequently, you know, they give no evidence of true conversion. Have you considered the possibility they were never evangelized at all? And then goes into a number of areas like repentance and preaching the law of God to shut people up to conviction of sin and a number of these well documented. You can go back in the stream of the Christian church ever since evangelism has been preached right back to the Old Testament.

Say, types of how to preach, it's all in there. For instance, let me give you just a little simple visual example. I have here a cheetah's Bible.

I mean, that's not what it's called. It's called a Zondervan Marked Reference. And I like this thing because it's got a nice concordance in the back and stuff.

But it's already pre-marked. That impresses people no end when you open it up and there's all these lovely colored scribbles all over the thing. And that's been pre-marked for you.

It was done by a guy called G. Gilchrist Lawson who put out the little Personal Workers New Testament with a red letter thing, you know. What he did is he did a whole Bible, kind of the product of his life's work in which he took the major themes of the Bible, broke them all down according to the weight that was given to them in Scripture. And he explains his method somewhere here if I can find it.

I look at this about once every eight years. No, I can't find it. It's in here somewhere.

Out of a total of 31,102 verses in the Bible, imagine counting them, 7,670 verses or nearly one verse and four can say of salvation. This includes over 1,900 verses on the necessity of holy living, 2,531 verses on the temporal punishment of the wicked. What happens right here and now, not future.

See? 413 verses on the future punishment of the wicked, 575 verses which shows God's love for the sinner and 182 verses which show God is no respecter of persons. Out of 23,145 verses in the Old Testament, 4,736 have some bearing on man's need of salvation or the way of salvation. And 2,934 verses out of a total of 7,957 in the New Testament also concerning the salvation of mankind.

So, what I want to do is just show you a couple of little blocks of stuff here. The first one is a subject which is very popular today and is well preached on and that is that faith is central to conversion. Now, around my fingers there are all the verses in the Bible on faith is the condition of conversion.

All right? By faith, we are saved. I've got my two fingers around them. Now, most of you, how many of you have ever heard a sermon on faith? Put your hands up.

I'd imagine most of you have. I'm going to turn the page here and I want to show you the Bible verses on repentance. There's at least twice as many verses on repentance.

But, what is this one down here? What is this with a page and over the page? Holy living should follow conversion. That's what it's about. There is more space given to this than almost any other theme concerning salvation.

Now, let me ask you a question. I wonder if you can guess what this question is. What do you think we're preaching today in balance? We talk about balance.

This isn't balance. This is tremendous emphasis on one side of the thing. And I think we ought to get from even a cursory glance at this block of stuff that God expects people who follow him to be like him.

And if they're not, there's a real problem either in their understanding or in their actual meeting him. And that, I think, is that what Dave Wilkerson's recently called a revival of holiness. There is a cry going out across the country for return to ordinary Christianity, not super spiritual Christianity, just ordinary Christianity.

Our Christianity is subnormal. We have become subcultures of the original Christians. We are no... To us, advanced, heavy-duty Christianity is not even kindergarten stuff.

We are so low we have to reach up to the touch bottom. Now, you could pick this up from any writer. I've got stacks of different people through the past.

Here is A.W. Towson, what it means to accept Christ, he says. A few things, fortunately, only a few are matters of life and death, such as a compass for a sea voyage or a guide for a journey across the desert. To ignore these vital things is not to gamble or take a chance.

It is to commit suicide. Here it is either be right or be dead. To the question, what must I do to be saved, we must learn the correct answer.

To fail here is not to gamble with our souls. It is to guarantee eternal banishment from the face of God. Here we must be right or we will be finally lost.

Being spiritually lazy, we naturally tend to gravitate towards the easiest way of settling our religious questions. Hence the formula, Accept Christ, has become a panacea of universal application and I believe it has been fatal to many. Trouble is the whole Accept Christ attitude is likely to be wrong.

It shows Christ applying to us rather than us to him. It makes him stand hat in hand awaiting our verdict on him, instead of kneeling with troubled hearts awaiting his verdict on us. It may even permit us to accept Christ by an impulsive mind or emotions painlessly at no cost, lost to our ego and no inconvenience to our usual way of life.

I must be frank in my feeling that a notable heresy has come into being in the Evangelical circles. The widely accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need him as Savior and that we have a right to postpone our obedience to him as Lord as long as we want to. And then he goes on.

That's Posen. And we could pick up the same theme from people like Catherine Booth. Here's Catherine Booth's popular Christianity.

Another modern representation of Christ is that of a substitutionary Savior, not in a sense of atonement, but in the way of obedience. This Christ is held up as embodying in himself the sum and substance of the sin of salvation, needing only to believe in that as accepted by the mind as the atoning sacrifice and trusted in a securing for the sinner all the benefits involved in his death without respect to any inward change in the sinner himself. This Christ is held up as a justification and protection in sin, not a deliverer from sin.

In other words, men are taught Christ obeyed the law for them, but he is placed as obedience in the stead of or as substitution of the sinner's own obedience or sanctification, which is in effect like saying, though you may be untrue, Christ is your truth. Though you may be unclean, Christ is your chastity. Though you may be dishonest, Christ is your honesty.

Though you may be insincere, Christ is your sincerity. The Christ of God never undertook to perform any such offices for his people, but he did undertake to make them new creatures and thus to enable them to perform this. He never undertook to be true instead of me, but to make me true to the very core of my soul.

He never undertook to make me pass for pure, either to God or to men, but to enable me to be pure. He never undertook to make me pass for honest or sincere, but to renew me in the spirit of my mind, so I could not help but be both as a result of the operation of his Holy Spirit in me. He never undertook to love God instead of my doing so with all my heart and mind and soul and strength, but he came on purpose to empower and inspire me to do this.

The idea of a substitutionary Christ accepted as an outward covering instead of the power of an endless life is a cheat of the devil and has been the ruin of thousands of souls. I fear this view of Christ, so persistently preached in the present day, encourages thousands to live in a false hope while they are living in sin. Now, somebody asked a question about eternal security and one of our question answer things.

I believe in eternal security. I do not believe in carnal security. A person living a life unlike Jesus and no heart's desire to be like him, is still saved.

Saved from what? Certainly not from sin. And that's what Jesus came to do that nobody else can do. He is the only one who can deliver from sin.

Now, we could go through chunks of this stuff and you can go to the Puritan writers or the pilgrims or the mystics or the evangelicals or the reformers or the modern evangelical fundamentalists have made a jump in the last fifty, sixty, eighty years. There's been a decay from that original preaching of, we'll call it no saviourhood without lordship. You know what they preach in Behind the Iron Curtain? No saviourhood without lordship.

They never heard of a division of a thing. You get saved, that's it, Jesus is your boss. Before the Kremlin was, now Jesus is.

That's it. And some of the third, other third world countries, in Africa, Latin America, they, if you said, well, you've made Jesus your saviour, have you made him your lord? They wouldn't know what in a fact you were talking about. You see, you know, it's not what Jesus does, it's who he is.

It's like me saying, I accept my wife as my personal dishwasher. It's who he is, not what he does. That's secondary to who he is.

And he is first and foremost. He's lord 747 times in the New Testament. And wherever that phrase, saviour, lord and saviour, it's always in that order.

Lord and saviour. It's never flipped. Lord and Christ.

Lord and saviour. And that's not what Jesus does. it's who he is.

That voice looks weird to me, so I'm just going to put you in it. All right? Now, if you make a separation between lord and saviour, then you're going to have some funny people. And this is the way they look.

They're Christians, but they're hookers. Still. Because they haven't given that area to the lordship of Christ yet.

They're Christians, but they're still addicts. They're Christians, but they're still, you fill in the blanks. They're Christians, but they're still demon-possessed.

They're Christians, but they're still, fill in the blanks. You can put all kinds of things in between this, and you need to put it in to explain an anomaly of a person who is a Christian, but still living exactly like their non-Christian neighbours. And what you put in there just depends on whatever's in the particular year you speak at.

You see? You could put discipleship in here. You could put baptism of the spirit. You could put deliverance.

You can put, you know, fill in the blanks, whatever. And on our, there is a sense in which we must go. Right? I mean, how many of you have gone in the last year? Or last hour? Or the last? Now, let me give you a little distinction here that has been of value to me.

It has to do with an electronics analogy. There are two kinds of circuits in electronics. One's called digital.

One's called analogue. An analogue circuit is a little bit like a dimmer on a light. If you're looking at it on a graph, it would go up slowly like that.

It's like a light dimmer or a volume controller on a radio, like this. Ah! See that? A little bit at a time. Like this, see? Digital, though, on a scope, would look like that.

It's either on or it's off. It's up, it's down. Nothing in between.

It's just like that. Like a light switch. It's not sort of part on and part, and it's off.

See? Just like that. Now, these are computer-type circuits and these are linear sound-type circuits and stuff like that. All right? Now, growth in Christian things is growth in grace, response, obedience to God's grace.

That's one thing. And then, growth also in wisdom. In our learning, ah, let's change this one to obey.

All right? Those are two things. Growth in response to God as He gives us His royal commands and then learning what that thing is. Now, here is what the Christian life looks like then.

One of these components, these two things, to be loving and to be wise is essentially what it means to be holy. God is light. God is love.

Two essential elements of a holy life. Wisdom and love. Those two things.

And out of all of those things flows all of God's actions. His mercy, His judgment, all of those things flow from His holiness, His wisdom and His love implemented by His power. Okay? Now, growth in the Christian life then is growth in two different things, but this is the way it happens.

Analog growth is growth in wisdom. That's called line on line, precept on precept. That's the way God teaches you.

He gives you one little thing and then the next little thing and the next little thing. He doesn't just go ba-boom and dump everything on you. He gives you line on line.

See? Takes you like a little kid and gives you one thing and then the next thing. But obedience is digital. Obedience is yes or no.

It is not maybe. And what we have done in our day is made not only learning analog but obedience analog. So a person is a little bit more obedient than they were yesterday, which is like being sort of God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all except.

And that is, what that does is it cuts out the absolutes in the Christian life, see? It, it, uh, Mario Morello calls it we are ish, it's, it's ishness. We praise ish, we worship ish, we obey ish. You say to a person, are you serving the Lord? Well, more or less ish.

And what does that mean? If I say to a girl, are you pregnant? Well, more or less ish. What does that mean? She's either is or she's not. You married? Well, kind of more or less.

Those are two biblical illustrations of conversion. Birth and marriage. And there, you know, yes or no.

It's not a sort of mm-hmm, maybe. And we made it a maybe. And that's one of the most dangerous things you can do.

And we're not trying to hold up some kind of legal standard here. I'm just trying to hold up some standard at all. If we're going to preach the gospel and hold a standard up, you're going to hold your Mickey Mouse one up or his.

We're going to say, look, this is as good as I've ever got, so why don't you try and be like this? Then we're back on that last ground. Compare ourselves with ourselves. I would rather hold a standard up that I can't make that God tells me is His standard, than to hold up a standard I can easily do and make that.

It's an embarrassing thing to stand before God and say, well, I passed on my standards. You see what I'm talking about? If we don't have, matter of fact, Victor Frankl said that we need something bigger than ourselves to give ourselves to to be healthy. You're not mentally healthy if you don't have something bigger than yourself to give yourself to.

That's why a person will work for a firm, they'll retire him at 60 years old, give him a gold watch, and he goes home and he's dead in two weeks because he lost his gold. He had nothing left to give himself to, so he just lay down and died. Now, if we have an infinite God, and we do, and we're finite beings, and we are, and he says, you be holy, for I am holy, or be perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect, then where are you going to come to the end of that? When are you going to have time to be laid back and mellow? When will you arrive? Here I am, I have arrived.

Listen, who saved the Apostle Paul? Did he do a good job? Did he have the proper counseling? I would imagine so. Would you not? To be saved by Christ himself? Do you think the Apostle Paul knew Jesus? Would you think? It doesn't take more than three brain cells to say, well, yes, he probably did. Then why in the world does Paul, at the end of his life, say that I might know him? Because he understood this.

Okay? We sin against God when we make obedience analog. And tell people you can obey a little bit more than you did before. You obey or you disobey.

We reject what God says, we're not partially obedient. The myth of partial obedience has eaten out the heart of the church. The myth of partial obedience.

Here's God, he speaks to Jonah, arise and go to Nineveh. So Jonah does something, he arises, dynamite, and he goes to Tarshish. He would have said, well, I do most of what you say.

God arranged a small voyage in a fish? All right, now, I'm going to give you some things. How much like a Christian can a non-Christian be? That's a big question. How much like a Christian can a non-Christian be? How moral can a lost man be? The Bible answers exceedingly so.

God looks at the heart, men look at the outward appearance. Now, Matthew 23, 28. You can be outwardly spotless.

Matthew 23, 28. Remember when Keith and I were in Australia some years ago? We went out to eat after one of his concerts, and it was kind of late at night, about 12 or 1. We went to this little pancake house type place, and there was a girl who served us, and she looked like a charismatic Christian. I mean, she smiled and brought all this stuff, and she was nice and kind, you know, she didn't have a wart on her nose, she didn't fly in on a broomstick or anything.

She was very nice. She kind of looked like a Christian would look, right? The one you expect So, Keith talking to me, you know, we're talking about early, first young Christians, how easy it is sometimes to witness before you learn all the dangers of what you ought not to do, and then don't do anything. And Keith was talking about how in the early days, he could witness easily to waitresses, and Keith being, of course, tactful as you know he is, and always very careful to say the right thing.

This waitress comes back, and Keith in illustration, he's saying, you know, I used to witness to waitress just like this, boom, and then he turns around to this girl who's bringing us their butter pancakes or whatever, and he says, excuse me, do you know Jesus? Right, you know, this kind of delicate, subtle approach to the gospel. And she looks at him in the strangest way, like, like this, and said, no, I wouldn't want to know him, which shocked Keith. I mean, he nearly dropped his pancake.

He was so, you know, he didn't expect anything except that, sort of in person brush, well, no, you know, well, but not, no, I wouldn't want to know him. I mean, not that, not from this nice, you know, charismatic Christian looking girl. And Keith went, oh, oh, oh, why not? Well, it works to that effect, and she said, you're a Christian, are you? He said, yes.

She said, you wouldn't understand. Put the pancakes down and left. So, keep thinking, you know, what is this? So eventually, you know, she comes back for the check or whatever the thing is, and Keith nails her again, you know, what are you into, he says, you know.

She says, the reason why I wouldn't want to give my life to Jesus is because I love the devil. He is my master and my Lord, and he helps me in everything I do, and I worship him, and he is, he's the one, the only one I'd ever serve and give my life to. And then Keith nearly regurgitated his butter pancakes, because that is a total shock.

You expect, you know, this person's a, they come in looking like Rosemary's baby, you know, with claws as they put the, you know, the broom packed there, and as they leave, some of the most demonic people I've ever met in my life are the most outwardly beautiful. One young girl, the devil promised her that if she married him, she would become secretary of the next president, and he would give her power in the land. All these trippy things.

He's a liar, of course. But boy, she was on her way up there. She had a memory.

She could pick something up and look at it and never forget it. Just like this, you know. Unbelievable.

And the most nice-looking girl you ever saw. And she was married to the devil. It's not outwardly spotless.

They'd be Pharisees. You know who the Pharisees were? We think of them as sort of a bunch of Freddy Pharisee and saying religious things. These guys were the spotless ones, boy.

They were the heavy-duty dudes. They were the top evangelical fundamentalists of their day. It's like saying, see Billy Graham, unless your righteousness exceeds his, you're going to go to hell.

And you think, well, Billy Graham, he doesn't make it. Nobody's going to make it. That was the same kind of effect Jesus had.

You know, we're not saying Billy Graham is actually a revening wolf inside. He's a godly man. I'm talking about, can you imagine the shock it would be for you to look up to your top religious leaders and have God say, forget it.

Motives are wrong. Their outsides are nice. Their insides are rotten.

Next, you can be prayerful. Mark 12, 40. We think that if you really pray a lot, you must be saved.

Jesus said, you ask and you receive not. He didn't say, you didn't ask. He said, you ask and you receive not, in the book of James, because you ask and miss, that you may spend it on your own lusts, in effect.

Now, the Pharisees prayed five times a day. Jesus said, beware the scribes, which for pretense make long prayers. They shall receive greater damnation.

You can be zealous in religion. Zeal is not a test of genuine Christianity. Some of the most zealous people in the world are not saved at all.

They're deeply into what they are into. You know, you can get hit up for flowers or cookies or stuff by the most zealous people. They're door to door.

Hello, we're from the First Church of Iowa. We want to tell you about the heaviest thing that's ever come down the pike. I went to Israel many years ago.

I saw Masada there. My wife actually went out in the desert and sunlight came up and stood there. Where today, the Israelis go when the tank battalions are getting ready for their graduation service.

And they stand there as a little bit like the Alamo. Masada is a place where just a handful of Jewish zealots, rather than Baba, the Roman Empire, and to give up their devotion to their tradition. They all lay down and they died.

They killed themselves. Five handpicked people went through and put to death by their consent and choice. Every man, woman, and child in the place.

And then they lay down beside their wives and children and fell on their own swords. And when the Romans finally broke in, I hear Mr. Spock, I'm coming in. When the Romans finally broke in, a day later, they had this eerie thing.

All the food heaped up and spoiled. All the weapons destroyed and just a pile of corpses. They died rather than betray the smallest diode of their religion.

Were they Christian? No. Did they really know God? No, but they were deeply devoted to a religious tradition, enough to lay their lives down for Him. Jonestown is another example.

You do not have to be a Christian to be zealous. Not at all. You can be conscientious in spiritual duties.

You can know and read the Bible. Now, you talk about knowing and reading the Bible. If we took the Pharisees as an example, you wouldn't believe how heavy they were.

To get to be an ordinary scribe, which was the lowest on the totem pole, you copied out by hand the Scriptures and you memorized them. How many of you have memorized the Bible? They did, plus great chunks of the Torah and everything else. Now it's just to be a scribe.

To be a lawyer, you had to not only know it, you had to be able to interpret it. But to be a Pharisee, you had to not only know it and interpret it correctly, you had to live it perfectly. Then you could be a Pharisee.

And it was these people that Jesus said, you're not going to make it. Now, can you imagine the shock that is? You can go to church. You can enjoy going to services.

You can like speakers that love God and not be a Christian. Ezekiel 33, an Old Testament example of this, God said this to Ezekiel, Son of man, the children of your people talk about you one to another and say, Come, I hear. Come, I pray you and listen to the word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

And people gathering before Ezekiel and there's word of mouth saying, hey, listen, this is heavy, boy. This guy's speaking a real word from God. And he said, they sit before you as my people, but you are one to them that has a lovely voice and knows how to play well on an instrument.

They hear your words and they will not do them. With their mouth, they show much love, but their heart goes after their own covetousness. God said they like it, but they just like, they like the things you're saying.

Hey, wasn't that a heavy message? But they're not changed. Their heart is no different. They like going to services.

They like listening to Christians, but they're not themselves. You can be active in witnessing. Matthew 23, 15.

And in YWAM we know this. All across the world, there are people who had signed up for missions activities who on the mission field got saved. Just like John Wesley.

Remember? Went out to convert the heathen and, oh, who will convert me? How many kids? Best recommended out of all pastors of the Zod, greatest young person, very zealous, keen, goes there. Three months into the missions program, he goes, I'm a Christian, and gets saved. See? Happens all over the place.

Here's what Jesus said. Matthew 23, 15. Well unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, you cross land and sea to win one follower, and when you have him, you make him twice the child of hell that you are.

Now, isn't that a heavy thing for witnessing? All right. Let's take a break. Why don't we have a break?

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